

ACTION PROGRAM

The following table summarizes the major recommendations of this Plan. Certain items are recommended as high priorities. The timing of each recommendation is listed, as well as which agencies should have the primary responsibility to carry out the recommendation.

NATURAL FEATURES AND AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Continue to expand Agricultural Security Areas in Spring Township to make land eligible for easement purchase and to protect farmers against nuisance challenges.	Township Supervisors, PCs, Property-owners	Short-term	
Consider zoning provisions that preserve farmland and natural areas, particularly through promoting the optional transfer of density to more suitable lands.	Governing bodies, PCs	Ongoing	
In rural conservation areas, permit a range of activities that allow opportunities for supplemental income for farmers on large tracts of land.	Governing bodies, PCs	Short-term	
To protect water quality and fish habitats, carefully enforce State regulations on erosion control through on-site inspections.	Governing bodies, PCs, Property-owners	Ongoing	
Minimize unnecessary removal of trees during construction, and make sure temporary fencing is used to avoid damage to tree trunks and root systems.	Governing bodies, PCs, property-owners	Short-term	
Spring Township should continue to prohibit new buildings in the entire 1% floodplain and to require studies by developers where there is any question that an unmapped floodplain may exist. The boroughs should continue to carefully regulate building in the floodplain	Governing bodies, PCs, Property-owners	Ongoing	X
Require professional wetland studies whenever development is proposed in suspect areas and establish a 20 foot building setback around wetlands to avoid intrusions by construction equipment. Require a building a paving setback from all creeks. A smaller width is appropriate in more urban areas, while a larger width should be required in rural areas.	Governing bodies, PCs, Property-owners, PennDOT	Ongoing	

Chapter 13 - Action Program

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Require professional geologic studies to address sinkhole/subsidize hazards at the time any major new development is submitted for approval within areas with limestone geology within the region.	Governing bodies, PCs, Property-owners	Ongoing	
Continue to use mandatory dedication provisions in subdivision ordinances to require dedication of open space or payment of recreation fees as part of major new residential developments.	Governing bodies, PCs, Property-owners	Ongoing	
Minimize potential impacts to core habitat areas. Development activities should be extremely limited in areas of known core habitat.	Governing bodies, PCs, Property-owners	Short-term	X
<p>Protect important natural features, with a special emphasis upon the creeks, steep slopes and mature woods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continually work to avoid and address stormwater problems. - Continue to limit development in flood-prone areas. - Work with neighboring municipalities, State agencies and volunteer organizations to preserve important natural areas. - Maintain and plant thick vegetation along streams to protect water quality and fishing habitats, including carrying out Best Management Practices recommendations in the regional Tulpehocken Creek Stormwater Management Plan. 	Governing bodies, PCs, ZHBs, Property-owners, Adjacent municipalities	Ongoing	X

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Encourage modes of transportation, patterns of land uses, and designs of buildings that conserve energy.	Governing bodies, PCs, Property-owners	Long-term	

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Improve existing parks and playgrounds to meet a wide variety of recreational needs.	Governing bodies, Municipal Parks and Recreation	Ongoing	
Emphasize high-quality police, emergency medical and fire protection services. Promote continued cooperation between providers, including those in adjacent municipalities.	Emergency providers, Governing bodies, Adjacent Municipalities	Ongoing	X
Continually explore ways to minimize local government expenses and increase revenues, including use of grants.	Governing bodies, Municipal staff	Ongoing	
Continue to provide excellent water and sewage services, with regular investments to provide reliable services.	Municipal Authorities and water companies	Ongoing	

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Consider alternative ways to preserve important historic buildings, such as requiring special zoning approval by the governing body or zoning hearing board before demolition is allowed.	Governing bodies, PCs, Historic Organizations	Ongoing	
Seek cost-effective ways of preserving historic buildings, including providing information and advice to property owners. Promote greater interest in the region's history and historic buildings.	Municipal staff, Historic organizations	Ongoing	
Consider zoning incentives to promote the preservation of historic buildings. This could include allowing certain uses within restored historic buildings that otherwise would not be allowed in the zoning district. For example, a restored historic building in a residential district might be allowed to be used as an office or bed and breakfast inn.	Governing bodies, PCs	Short-term	

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Update zoning ordinances to make sure that all desirable types of businesses are allowed in appropriate business zoning districts. Hold requirements for special zoning approvals to a reasonable minimum and minimize setbacks between adjacent businesses. These steps are important to promote economic development and a wider choice of employment opportunities.	Governing bodies, PCs	Short-term	X
Utilize the County's Economic Development Web Mapping Tool to identify appropriate sites to locate industrial and commercial development.	Governing bodies, PCs, EDs, BCIDA, BCPC	Short-term	X
Market high priority sites for economic development initiatives	Governing bodies, PCs, EDs, BCIDA, BCPC	Short-term	X
Prioritize infrastructure improvements associated with sites that are identified as potential locations for industrial development.	Governing bodies, PCs, EDs, BCIDA, BCPC	Short-term	X
Support entrepreneurship and small business development and partner with higher learning institutions and technical schools.	Governing bodies, PCs, EDs, Local colleges, School districts, GRCCI	Short-term	
Strengthen business districts to maximize revenue, including pedestrian amenities and transportation systems. Support reuse of existing buildings and infill development.	Governing bodies, PCs, EDs	Short-term	
Strengthen the quality and competitiveness of the Region's workforce. Partner with higher learning and workforce institutions.	Governing bodies, PCs, Local colleges, School districts	Short-term	
Position the Suburban Berks West Region as a destination Region. Partner with Convention and Visitors Bureau, Chamber, and arts organizations to promote arts, culture and events.	Governing bodies, PCs, GRCVB	Short-term	

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Cultivate and attract a skilled workforce by providing access to attainable and high quality housing options, well-maintained neighborhoods and amenities and ensuring high quality schools for families.	County agencies, Job training organizations, School districts, Local colleges	Ongoing	X
Complete the initiatives of the BOSS 2020 Revitalization Committee.	Sinking Spring Borough, PennDOT, BCPC	Ongoing	X
Continue implementing the recommendations of the Spring Township Penn Avenue Revitalization Plan	Spring Township	Ongoing	X

TRANSPORTATION

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Work with PennDOT to resolve traffic congestion bottlenecks and traffic safety problems, such as encouraging new road links around trouble-spots. Seek funding through the 12 Year Plan to resolve traffic problems in the region.	Governing bodies, PCs, PennDOT	Ongoing	X
Design residential streets (in new developments) to discourage use by through-traffic, limit truck traffic on residential streets where feasible, and improve major roads to relieve congestion so traffic will not be diverted to residential streets.	Governing bodies, PCs	Ongoing	
Improve pedestrian and bicycle access and encourage greater use of public transit. Study the potential of expanded public transit service in the region.	Governing bodies, PCs, BARTA/SCTA	Ongoing	
Continually explore ways to ease parking issues for residents and businesses. Try to come up with low cost alternatives rather than creating expensive and unsightly parking structures.	Governing bodies, PCs	Short-term	
Consider the development of a regional trail/ pedestrian/bicycle plan that provides guidance for an interconnected system of pedestrian improvements between the municipalities and to other regional trail systems.	Governing bodies, PCs, Municipal parks and recreation		

LAND USE

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Update, if necessary, each municipality's development regulations to carry out the Future Land Use Plan.	PCs, Governing Bodies	Short-term	
Adopt and/or enforce existing municipal property maintenance codes to avoid blighted and unsafe conditions.	Governing bodies	Short-term	X
Utilize the County's Blighted Property Review Committee to review and eliminate blighted residential properties from neighborhoods so that they can be redeveloped into usable housing.	Governing Bodies, BCRA, BCPC	Ongoing	
Help to link residents that are in need of assistance with the resources that are available, including housing rehabilitation and job training programs.	Municipal staffs and non-profit organizations	Short-term	
Work to increase home ownership, including expanding programs to help persons afford closing costs of home purchases.	Co. agencies, financial institutions, PHFA	Ongoing	
Review and/or update zoning ordinances to make sure that all desirable types of businesses are allowed in appropriate business zoning districts. Hold requirements for special zoning approvals to a reasonable minimum and minimize setbacks between adjacent businesses. These steps are important to promote economic development and a wider choice of employment opportunities.	Governing bodies, PCs	Short-term	
Make sure that local regulations and permit processes are as streamlined as reasonable, to avoid unnecessary delays and higher housing costs. This is particularly important for routine changes to existing homes and for new and expanding employers.	Governing bodies, PCs, ZHBs, Municipal staffs	Short-term	

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Use zoning regulations to direct most housing away from areas planned for rural conservation and important natural areas. Provide moderate densities on areas that can be served by existing public water and sewage services - to minimize the total amount of land consumed by development.	Twp. PCs, Property owners, Co. Conservation District	Ongoing	
Place an emphasis on zoning provisions that preserve farmland and natural areas, particularly through “Open Space Development” that involves clustering of homes in return for permanent preservation of a substantial part of the tract in open space. In the townships, promote the optional transfer of development rights that allows the number of homes that would have been allowed on an outlying tract to be developed on a more suitable tract, in return for preservation of the outlying tract.	PCs, Property-owners, Co. Conservation District	Ongoing	
Review and/or update zoning ordinances to make sure that excessive setbacks are not required for routine additions to homes and for decks and pools. These types of improvements should not be overly regulated in order to encourage residents to invest in older homes, instead of moving to new homes in outlying areas. This policy is particularly important because excessive setback requirements can cause an administrative burden upon property-owners and the municipalities.	Governing Bodies, PCs	Short-term	
Update zoning ordinances to carefully control the types and locations of intense business uses near neighborhoods. This particularly includes gas stations, 24 hour stores, adult uses and similar uses that may cause nuisances for neighboring homes.	Governing Bodies, PCs	Short-term	
Provide density incentives for housing developments that are permanently limited to occupancy by older persons.	Governing Bodies, PCs, ZHBs	Ongoing	
Work with adjacent municipalities to ensure that compatible land uses and road patterns are in place.	Governing Bodies, PCs	Short-term	

Chapter 13 - Action Program

Recommended Action:	Responsible Parties	Time-frame	High Priority?
Emphasize code enforcement to avoid blight in neighborhoods. Consider a systematic housing inspection program for older rental units in the boroughs.	Governing Bodies, PCs, Adj. Mun.	Short-term	X
Use this plan as a guide to direct development, both in terms of location and type, where and how you want it to occur.	Governing bodies, PCs	Ongoing	

Abbreviations of Responsible Agencies/Groups:

Governing Bodies = Borough Councils and Township Boards of Supervisors/Board of Commissioners

PC = Municipal Planning Commissions

ZHB = Zoning Hearing Boards

Adj. Mun. = Adjacent Municipalities

DA = Downtown Associations

EDs = Berks County Economic Development Organizations

BCPC = Berks County Planning Commission

PennDOT = Pennsylvania Department of Transportation

PHFA = Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency

PHMC = Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

SCTA = South Central Transit Authority

BCRA = Berks County Redevelopment Authority

BCIDA = Berks County Industrial Development Authority

GRCVB = Greater Reading Convention and Visitors Bureau